

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The House Appropriations Committee today approved legislation that includes funding levels for the U.S. Department of Justice. Included in that bill is \$1.25 million for the Monterey County Joint Gang Task Force. Over the past three years, Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) has secured more than \$2 million for the task force.

"Helping create and grow the Gang Task Force has been my highest priority over the past few years," said Rep. Farr, who serves on the House Appropriations Committee. "I regularly meet with local law enforcement and elected officials to ensure that we're all cooperating to make this task force the most effective tool to combat gang violence."

The Gang Task Force is responsible for more than 1,700 arrests countywide and is a model and resource for effective gang suppression coupled with prevention and intervention programs. An additional \$3 million was previously provided by the Senate; if signed into law, these new funds would bring federal contributions to the Gang Task Force to more than \$6.3 million.

Enforcement finding is supplemented with additional funds for prevention programs, including the Silver Star Gang Prevention and Intervention Program. Proposed funding levels for that program are expected to be released this week.

"I again have to state the community's thanks and appreciation to Congressman Farr for his leadership in helping Salinas with its continued efforts to combat gang violence," said Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue. "The Congressman has worked diligently each year to assure that the total federal commitment for \$7.5 million to support the Monterey County Gang Task Force becomes a reality. This is especially important in the current fiscal downturn when local dollars are stretched. The CJS grant will be matched by local dollars to keep the comprehensive and successful GTF efforts fully staffed through FY09-10."

This funding bill--which covers commerce, justice and science issues--will next be brought before the full House of Representatives for a vote. The inclusion of these projects is an important step in securing final funding for the projects.

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